

**Virginia Complete Count Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**March 28, 2019**  
**Patrick Henry Building, West Reading Room**  
**1111 E. Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23219**  
**10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

**Attendees:** *Gilbert Bland, Razi Hashmi, Eric Lin, Gaylene Kanoyton, Suja Amir, Hon. Nancy Rodrigues, Rev. Dr. Jonathan Barton, Dr. William O'Hare, Julian Walker, Sarah Gross, Hyun Lee, Aida Pacheco, Jim Dau, Ashley Reynolds Marshall, Beth O'Connor, Margaret Nimmo Holland, Sreedhar NagiReddi, Jonathan Zur, Rita Surratt*

19 Virginia Complete Count members in attendance

**Surrogates:** *Carah Whaley (for Jon Alger),*

**Absent:**

*President Jonathan Alger, Dr. James Fedderman, Terron Sims II, Dr. Gregory Howard, Dr. Leo Whittaker, Rev. Kevin Chandler, Steve Kast, Monica Sarmiento, Elda Stanco Downey, Gia Genie Nguyen Le, Dr. Tiffany Jana, Caryn Foster Durham,*

12 Virginia Complete Count members absent

**Governor's Office Staff Present:**

*Kelly Thomasson, Secretary of the Commonwealth*  
*Traci Deshazor, Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth*  
*Fernando Mercado-Violand, Special Assistant and the Director of Latino Outreach*

**Guests:**

*Governor Ralph S. Northam*  
*Ron Brown, Partnership Specialist, U.S. Census Bureau*  
*Kevin Krigsvold, Partnership Specialist, U.S. Census Bureau*  
*Raquel Cepeda, Partnership Specialist, U.S. Census Bureau*  
*Colin Louis, Partnership Specialist, U.S. Census Bureau*  
*Various staff and interns from the Secretary of the Commonwealth*

**Call to Order (Secretary Kelly Thomasson)**

The Honorable Kelly Thomasson, Secretary of the Commonwealth of Virginia, called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

With a motion from Commissioner Ashley Marshall, and a second by Commissioner Eric Lin, the January meeting minutes were agreed to.

With a motion by Commissioner Rev. Jon Barton, seconded by Commissioner Eric Lin, the meeting agenda was agreed to.

**Opening Remarks and General Updates (Secretary Kelly Thomasson)**

**Membership:**

Secretary Kelly Thomasson introduced Rita Suratt, Executive Director of the Dickenson County Chamber of Commerce, as new member of the Virginia Complete Count Commission.

Additional Commissioners are being discussed to represent the Jewish faith community as well as representatives from local governments/complete count committees.

Nony Aberjano had to resign from the board because he is relocating to the Philippines for seven months; we are looking to add another leader in the Filipino community from Hampton Roads.

### **Job Vacancies:**

Secretary Kelly Thomasson discussed the need to decimate information regarding jobs with the Census Bureau. This is a major priority for the Census Bureau. We are currently sharing the Virginia job postings on the Secretary of the Commonwealth's social media but we are working on additional ideas to facilitate sharing this information.

#### ***Comment:***

*Ron Brown: Census Bureau is having difficulty finding staff in Nova - have shared with the SOC, VEC, Libraries. Looking to hire 100K in Virginia. Census Bureau is opening an office here in Richmond, where 30-40 management positions will be available in Richmond, pay for these positions are \$30-\$40 an hour. We are looking to do the same in Crystal city, and Virginia Beach.*

#### ***Question:***

*Jim Dau: What is the website?*

*Response: Ron Brown: [Www.2020census.gov/jobs](http://www.2020census.gov/jobs) these are for the field office jobs. For the management and more senior positions, they will have to go to USAjobs.gov.*

#### ***Question:***

*Former Census Partnership Specialist Charles Moore: What are some steps that have been taken to engage elected officials? do you have recruitment firms?*

*Response:*

*Ron Brown: We are leveraging elected official to help us find the right candidates. The interviewing process that up a lot of my time, we work it in tandem with the leadership in the Philadelphia office.*

#### ***Question***

*Commissioner Aida Pacheco: What is the follow up with application? Do people hear back?*

*Response: Ron Brown*

*They can check their status on the US Jobs, we do not communicate that they didn't get the job.*

#### ***Question: Margaret Nimmo Holland***

*How long do these canvasser jobs last in comparison to the others?*

*Response:*

*Brown: We are trying to keep folks as long as we can but by fall 2020 the positions will end, so will the more professional roles as well.*

#### ***Question: Ashley Marshall:***

*Will a high school degree be sufficient for some of these professional jobs?*

*Response: Ron Brown*

*Yes, there are a range of jobs available, including enumerators and also managerial jobs.*

### **Court Case regarding Citizenship Question:**

On April 23, 2019 The Supreme Court of the United States will hear the New York Vs. Secretary of Commerce Case, this case is arguing that the Secretary violated the Administrative Procedure Act. There is also a California case that argues that the question violates the enumeration clause, and that would likely be heard at once.

### **April 1 Census Awareness Day**

We are going to host three roundtables - Alexandria, Richmond, Norfolk. Inviting stakeholders, media; these are events with 15-25 stakeholders to discuss the importance of the 2020 census and challenges that will be faced to get an accurate count. Governor Northam will participate in the Richmond event. Secretary Thomasson will attend the events in Alexandria and Richmond. Deputy Secretary DeShazor will attend the Norfolk event. The official hashtag for social media will be #VACompleteCount

### **Proclamations:**

We have been asking localities to proclaim April 1 as Census Awareness Day. We have had good responses from localities around the Commonwealth; Commissioner Nancy Rodrigues has done a great job helping spearhead this effort. We can still submit requests for more localities and name the proclamation April Census Awareness Month. The email with the materials for this meeting has a copy of a draft proclamation that commissioners can use for their localities.

### **Opinion Editorials:**

Maragret Nimmo Holland, has an op-ed that will be published in the Richmond Times Dispatch on Sunday highlighting Census Awareness Day. We encourage other commissioners to submit op-eds to their local papers as well. Governor's staff can help edit and advise.

### **Other Census Awareness Events:**

Millennial Harrisonburg Event hosted by James Madison University

Local Complete Count Committees will be announcing their launch in Arlington, Prince William, Alexandria, Loudoun, and Virginia Beach in the next week. The Northern Virginia Community Foundation will also be launching their complete count committee on April 4.

***Comment:** Commissioner Gaylene Kanoyton  
The Unity March on April 4th in Hampton will have census material to give out.*

### **Work Plan (Presented by Deputy Secretary Traci DeShazor)**

We have edited the work plan to reflect many of the additions and suggestions of commissioners, many of those are being executed in the following days: Census Awareness Day, the Website Toolkit, and the Op-ed campaign.

*(Copy of the updated work plan that was presented at the meeting is attached)*

### **Work Plan Discussion- Q&A**

***Comment:** Ron Brown  
The United States Census Bureau tries to avoid outreach around courts because folks might associate the Census with the criminal system.*

**Question:** *Commission Margaret Nimmo Holland*

*What is our slogan?*

**Response:** *Traci Deshazor*

*Our slogan is "Community. Connection. Be Counted."*

**Question:** *Commissioner Margaret Nimmo Holland*

*How are we leveraging the social services and organizations that get federal funding, or federal agencies that have direct contact with these hard to reach communities?*

**Response:** *Ron Brown*

*We work with many federal agencies, and communicate with them to ensure they are supporting our census efforts, this is a critical part of our efforts.*

**Comment:** *Ron Brown*

*The Census Bureau has funding for some public service announcements, and we are looking to do TV buys.*

**Response:** *Gaylene Kanoyton:*

*I'd be interested in that list to make sure we hit all media.*

**Question:** *Commissioner Nancy Rodrigues*

*What if we send something out from the Governor's Office asking businesses that partner and do business with the state to promote the census?*

**Response:** *Secretary Kelly Thomasson*

*That is something that we can look into and also engaging the Small Business Supplier Diversity agency and getting those businesses to collaborate with us as well.*

**Comment:** *Commissioner Jim Dau*

*We need to be very clear with our publication materials and making sure that we protect against predatory information. Also need to engage law enforcement.*

**Response:** *Ron Brown*

*We are going to send information on how to ensure that people know that they are talking to a census staffer, so that they know that their information is being protected.*

**Comment:** *Deputy Secretary Traci Deshazor*

*We need to include in our work plan outreach to seniors and we need to include education on how to interact with the census staff. We did add in our materials a footer who created the materials.*

**Comment:** *Secretary Kelly Thomasson:*

*We need to continue to flesh out our work plan on specific strategies for hard to reach communities, what we have established is a broader approach. We need to reflect and incorporate how we can really focus on hard to reach communities.*

**Comment:** *Ron Brown:*

*We have an app that helps you track what are the hard to reach communities with ROAM. This piece also relates to hiring. Exp: Richmond needs a Spanish-speaking specialist we need to find this person for Richmond. We need to have a staff that can relate to these communities. We are also looking at tracking the participation rates in real time by locality and by communities, beginning in April to the end of June 2020.*

**Response:** *Margaret Nimmo Holland*

*Trust issue, and thinking about staffing and relation of age, in reference to the concerns of seniors.*

**Response:** *Jim Dau:*

*The Virginia Retired Teachers Association would be a great resource for staffing, they are the types of folks who would be invested in the cause and would make great hires.*

**Question:** Aida Pacheco

*Are we going to leverage state agencies to help support with printing and marketing costs?*

**Response:** Suja: DARS and VRS will be important to engage for the Asian community.

**Response:** Deputy Secretary Traci Deshazor

*Great idea. Also all the materials on the VCCC website right now are all downloadable and shareable. You can share it as a PDF.*

**Comment:** Eric Lin

*There is data on census tracts that have high population by constituency group, and this data that will help us be strategic.*

**Response:** Deputy Secretary Traci Deshazor

*How are we leveraging the data, and how can we really use it to help us be successful. When we start to take a more in-depth look on hard to count communities.*

## **Messaging**

Secretary Kelly Thomasson explained the roles of commissioners as being public figures and key voices in driving the narrative around the census. An effective message for many is around the economic implications of the census, but we also want to be able to talk about the importance in a way to directly reach each audience and connect on a personal level. We want to make sure we have a set of talking points that we could all use, and then tailor to specific communities.

## **Messaging Q&A**

**Comment:** Ron Brown

*What is in it for them – people care about the program that it funds, reduced lunch, community programs, etc. People also care about the confidentiality of their forms, and they care about the privacy. Also how easy it is to fill out a form.*

**Comment:** Commissioner Rev Joe Barton: *It's not just the funding the planning so that the fed knows where the population is growing.*

**Comment:** Commissioner Jim Dau:

*The opening of the window of grabbing people's attention is smaller now. There is too much information out there. We want to talk about the listener not about us. We want to talk about narrative and present the facts and evidence that help support that. Baseball analogy for sharing the message: 1st base our communities aren't getting what they should, 2nd to 3rd what the census will do, 3rd how the census brings the change, and finally home what a complete count can bring.*

**Comment:** Commissioner Sarah Radcliff Gross:

*I think it would be valuable to present questions as a form to hook them into action (Do you care about access to free and reduced lunch?)*

**Comment:** Commissioner Aida Pacheco

*We want to talk about the act of filling out the census form, and what would happen to your community if you don't.*

**Response:** Gaylene: *We really have to give affirmation that their information is safe. We also talk about 2,000 and we multiply it by a community. \$2000 X 2000 people = \$4million per year or \$40M a decennial lost to the community.*

**Question:** Commissioner Dr. Jon Barton

*How do we get the \$2000 estimate of lost funding?*

**Response:** Ron Brown:

*It really depends on locality how much funding is at stake, and they make their own estimates.*

*That's why we are saying UP TO \$2000*

**Question:** Commissioner Gil Bland

*Should we frame Op-Eds regionally or statewide?.*

**Response:** Jim Dau

*People generally don't identify as Virginians, but they identify locally - suggest using a regional message.*

**Question:** Commissioner Gil Bland

*Is it more effective to talk about money lost or money gained?*

**Response:** Commissioner Jim Dau: *Negative works best.*

### **Special Guest: Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia Ralph S. Northam**

Governor Northam announced he has proposed a budget amendment for \$1.5 Million in state funding for Census outreach that will be considered by the General Assembly next week. Governor Northam thanked Commissioners for their hard work and emphasized the importance of the work that commissioners do in their communities is something that is critical and valuable, especially when there may be limited resources.

### **Media Engagement Presentation**

Commissioner Julian Walker presented best practices and tips when engaging with the media regarding the Census and the work of the Commission.

(Presentation attached)

### **Census Solution Workshops**

Nesreen Khashan with the U.S. Census Bureau joined the meeting to facilitate a Census Solutions Workshop (Presentation attached)

### **Census Solution Workshops – Breakout group reports**

#### **Group 1**

Commissioners: Rev Jon Barton, Jonathan Zur, Gilbert Bland, Dr. William O'Hare

Prompt: How might we engage grassroots organizations and community advocates in creating awareness campaigns to minimize the undercount of young children?

Solution: Work with the Secretary of Education to start a project where students help develop toolkits about the census that is sent to all known head start programs and childcare providers.

#### **Group 2**

Commissioners: Razi Hashmi, Aida Pacheco, Hyun Lee

Prompt: How might we create awareness campaigns to increase families' understanding of the ways the census benefits them and their communities?

Solution: Plan a campaign that has media and PSA component, but that also educates through the schools and through the faith communities. Campaign would involve marking the importance of April 1, asking them to circle, and to make a detailed plan on how they will ensure they turn in their census form either digitally or physically.

### Group 3

Commissioners: Eric Lin, Traci DeShazor, Ashley Marshall,

Prompt: How do we leverage existing resources to address the digital divide?

Solution: Partner with a large telecommunications company to provide a mobile bus that allows folks to fill out their census form electronically. Have the bus travel to rural areas, and promote the bus through TV, radio, and print.

### Group 4

Commissioner: Beth O'Connor, Secretary Kelly Thomasson, Sarah Gross, Suja Amir

Prompt: How might the library system or educational institutions serve as community hubs for Census education and awareness?

Solution: Partner with localities and organize large census fairs in libraries for people that don't have access to the internet. Partner with schools to help build and market the event, follow those that do

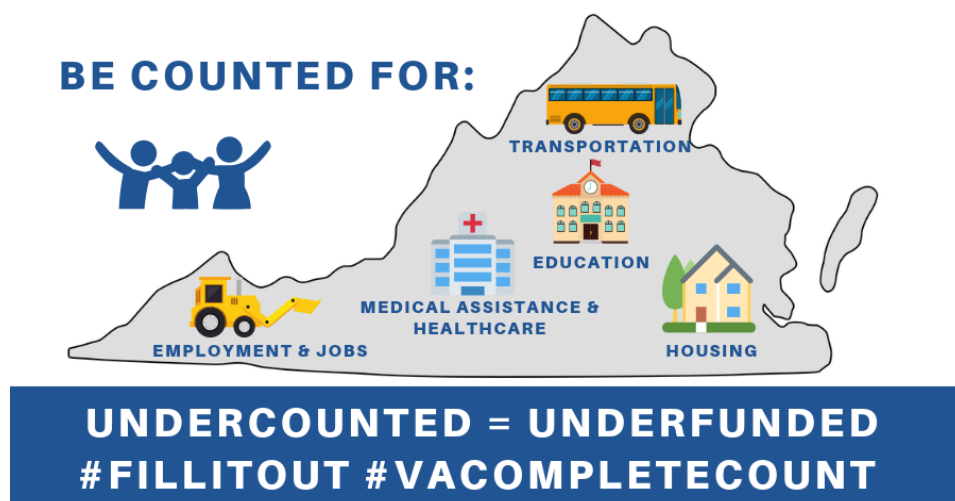
### Group 5

Commissioners: Carah Waley, Gaylene Kanoyton, Margaret Nimmo Holland, Nancy Rodrigues

Prompt: How might we create awareness campaigns to increase families' understanding of the ways the census benefits them and their communities?

Solution:

Undercounted = underfunded, develop an infographic that tells the story of the Census.



### **Next Steps (Traci DeShazor):**

The April 1st Roundtables will take place in Alexandria, Richmond, and Norfolk.

We are encouraging each commissioner (or a group of commissioners) to host Census Solutions Workshops around the state in April and in May. These can be oriented towards a specific constituent group, regionally, or towards a specific challenge.

*Question: Commissioner Eric Lin*

*Can the Census Bureau facilitate census solutions workshops?*

*Response: Ron Brown: Yes, please coordinate with our regional staff and they will be able to help assist during these workshops.*

### **Reporting Events**

A reporting structure has been created to let us know how many people commissioners have communicated about the VCCC and the census. We want to have an estimated contact number. We will send out a reminder before every meeting about keeping track of the of all the outreach you have engaged in.

*Comment: Ron Brown*

*We would also appreciate know of events so that we can have a CB representative so that we can track and include that outreach in our records.*

### **Request a Speaker Form**

There is a form on the website to request a speaker (staff or commissioners) for events. Commissioners share this information with organizations and their networks to let them know that this service is available.

The Next Meeting is Tuesday April 30th.

### **Meeting Adjourn 3:18**